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SECT 01 OF 29367

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P 251626Z MAR 77
FM (b)(3):10 USC 424
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~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 1 OF 2
SUBJ: THIS IS IR (b)(3):10 USC 424
1. ARGENTINA (AR)
2. (b)(3):10 USC 424
3. (U) POLITICAL MILITARY - LTG VIDELA'S MEETING WITH ARMY GENERALS.
4. N/A
5. 770321
6. 770323
7. 770321, BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
8. INITIATIVE PG2250
9.
10. (b)(3) 10 USC 424
11. NO
12. (b)(3):10 USC 424
13.

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14. (b)(3) 10 USC 424
15. NO
16. SUMMARY: ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ON 15 MAR 77, LIEUTENANT GENERAL VIDELA BRIEFED ALL ARMY GENERALS ON THE POLITICAL MILITARY SITUATION IN ARGENTINA. THE MEETING WHICH LASTED THE BETTER PART OF THE DAY ALSO INCLUED PRESENTATIONS BY THE ARMY STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VARIOUS MINISTREIES. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE SOURCE A WIDE VARIETY OF SUBJECTS WERE ADDRESSED AND DISCUSSED DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY.
22. DETAILS: 1. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ GENERAL VIDELA TOLD HIS GENERALS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH ITS NATIONAL REORGANIZATION THROUGH 1977 AND BEYOND. FURTHER, HIS ADMINISTRATIN PLANS TO INITIATE NO MAJOR PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS DURING THESE AUSTERE TIMES. HE DID NOT DISCOUTN THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, THAT PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS MIGHT UNDERTAKE SOME PROGRAMS FUNDED LOCALLY SUCH AS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT AND HOSPITAL MODERNIZATION. DURING THE COURSE OF THE BRIEFING, THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS WERE RATED IN ORDER OF ACHIEVEMENT. THE TOP FOUR GOVERNORS IN PRIORITY WERE B.G. (R) SAINT JEAN, BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE; B.G. (R) SERRANO, CHACO PROVINCE; B.G. (R) CHASSEING, CORDOBA PROVINCE; AND B.G. BUSSI, TUCUMAN PROVINCE. SOURCE NOTED THAT OE OR TWO OF THE LESS EFFECTIVE GOVERNORS MAY BE REPLACED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
2. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE ASSEMBLED GENERALS THAT THERE WOULD BE MO MAJOR PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HE DID NOT DISCARD THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME CABINET MEMBERS MAY EVENTUALLY GO, BUT GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT CHANGES, WHEN THEY COME, WOULD BE GRADUAL. GENERAL VIDELA ADDED THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER WITHIN THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE JOINT APPROACH TO PROBLEMS IS AT TIMES CUMBERSOME AND SLOW. NEVERTHELESS, HE FELT IT WAS THE BEST METHOD TO PROVIDE ALL PARTIES AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR VARIOUS POINTS OF VIEW. SOURCE COMMENTED, THAT INDEED THERE HAVE BEEN SOME LIVELY DEBTES ON SOME GOVERNMENT POLICIES. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH ADVOCATES AND CRITICS MARCH FORWARD WITH A PROGRAM ONCE A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE JUNTA. THE SERVICE CHIEFS ARE NOT ALWAYS COMPLETELY IN ACCORD WITH PROPOSED SOLUTIONS, BUT IN MOST CASES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COME TO AGREEABLE TERMS AND MOVE FORWARD WITH A UNINTED POSITION. IN THIS REGARD, SOUCCE STAATED THAT

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RUMORS AND STORIES OFTEN APPEAR IN THE PRESS CITING FRICTION BETWEEN THE SERVICES AND JUNTA MEMBERS. HE COMMENTED THAT JOURNALISTS OFTEN INTERPRET THIS NORMAL DEBATE AS CONFRONTATION WHEN, IN FACT HONEST DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IS EXPECTED AND HAS A PLACE IN THE GOVERNING PROCESS.

3. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ PRESIDENT VIDELA IDENTIFIED BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PROBLEM AREAS FOR ARGENTINA. DOMESTICALLY, HE STATED THAT THE COST OF LIVING, LABOR UNION REORGANIZATION, AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH WERE MAJOR CONCERNS. IN THE LATTER AREA SOURCE STATED THAT PERHAPS THREE BISHIOPS OUT OF APPROXIMATELY 70-80 WERE BAD APPLES. NOTWITHSTANDING, HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD SUFFICIENT INFLUENCE WITH THE CARDINAL TO CONTAIN THE PROBLEM. LTG VIDELA WENT ON TO SAY THAT ARGENTINA CAN ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS FROM ABROAD
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INFO RULPALJ/USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
BT
~~C O N F I D E N T I A L~~ SECTION 2 OF 2
SUBJ: THIS IS IR (b)(3):10 USC 424
FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS, HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES SUCH AS AMNESTY INTERNATION, AND THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. THE GOVERNMENT VIEWS THE CURRENT DIFFERENCES WITH THE U.S. AS A SHORT TERM PROBLEM THAT EVENTUALLY WILL NORMALIZE.
4. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ LTG VIDELA'S BRIEFING WAS FOLLOWED BY PRESENTATIONS BY THE ARMY STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE CABINET. THE ARMY G-3 STATED THAT HIS STAFF WAS STUDYING THE RAMIFICATIONS OF FMS CREDIT REDUCTION AND WAS LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES TO REPLACE THE POTENTIAL CREDIT LOSSES. THE ONLY OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST CAME FROM THE G-4 WHO STATED THAT THE ARMY HOPED TO PURCHASE NINE NEW BELL HELICOPTERS (NFI ON MODEL) AND DIESELIZE THE ARMY'S INVENTORY OF REO TRUCKS. JUSTICE, DEFENSE, AND PLANNING MINISTRIES INDICATED ALL WAS IN ORDER. THE EDUCATION MINISTRIES STATED THAT INFILTRATION IN THE UNIVERSITIES HAD BEEN CONTAINED

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AND THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS SHOULD SOON NORMALIZE. LABOR REPORTED THAT IT IS WORKING ON THE RIGHT TO STRIKE LAW AND HOPED IN THE YEAR AHEAD TO DEPOLITICIZE THE UNIONS AND REORGANIZE THEM. SOCIAL WELFARE STATED THAT IT HAS TAKEN A WHOLE YEAR TO REORGANIZE THE MINISTRY AND BRING SOME ORDER TO IT FOLLOWING THE PERONIST ABUSES. THE MINISTRY IS MOVING AHEAD SLOWLY BUT STILL FACES SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH HOUSING, WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH. THE ECONOMIC MINISTRY POINTED OUT THAT TREMENDOUS STRIDES HAD BEEN MADE IN THE PAST YEAR, NATIONAL BANKRUPTCY WAS AVOIDED AND THE RESERVE POSTURE IS IMPROVING. THE DEFICIT IS A BIT SMALLER THAN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, BUT SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT MUST BE MADE IN THIS AREA IN THE FUTURE. THE ECONOMISTS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES MUST BE REDUCED AND SOME STATE ENTERPRISES SOLD; AND THAT INFLATION CONTINUES TO BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM BUT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO SOFTEN THE PRICE SQUEEZE ON THE CONSUMER. SOURCE PROVIDED NO INFORMATION ON COMMENTS FROM THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OR INTERIOR MINISTRIES.

5. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ FINALLY, SOURCE STATED THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA DISCLOSED THAT HE WAS NOT PLEASED WITH PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC INFORMATION SECRETARIATE. HE FEELS THAT THE SECRETARIATE IS DIVORCED FROM REALITY, HAS LITTLE CONTACT WITH THE PEOPLE AND IS DOING A POOR JOB. CONSEQUENTLY, THIS STAFF OFFICE (WHICH IS HEADED BY A NAVY CAPTAIN) IS IN STORE FOR SOME MAJOR CHANGES. Sec. 3.3 (b) (1)

COMMENT: ~~(C)~~ [redacted] AND THE INFORMATION [redacted] WHILE INCOMPLETE, PROBABLY ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE EVENTS OF 15 MAR MEETING OF GENERALS. AT A MINIMUM, [redacted] PARTIALLY CONFIRMS INFORMATION BEING RECEIVED Sec. 3.3(b) (1) [redacted] IT SEEMS NOW THAT THE "IN FIGHTING" WITHIN THE ARMY HAS SUBSIDED, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT. THE GENERALS APPARENTLY HAVE DECIDED TO LET LTG VIDELA RUN THE SHOW AND MOVE FORWARD IN HIS SLOW, METHODICAL STYLE. HOW LONG HE CAN MAINTAIN THE MANDATE IS UNKNOWN, BUT HE CERTAINLY APPEARS TO BE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT, AND WELL IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.

(b)(3):10 USC 424 COMMENT: ~~(C)~~ ON 23 MAR A SENIOR ARMY OFFICER WORKING IN THE PRESIDENCY DISCLOSED Sec. 3.3(b) (1) [redacted] THAT AFTER SEVERAL WEEKS OF PRIVATE (AND SOMETIMES NOT SO PRIVATE) DEBATE WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES, THERE NOW SEEMS TO BE A FAIRLY STRONG CONSENSUS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING OF ARMY GENERALS AND FELT THAT PRESIDENT VIDELA'S POSITION HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED CONSIDERABLY.

THIS MSG HAS BEEN COORD/WITH EMBASSY.

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